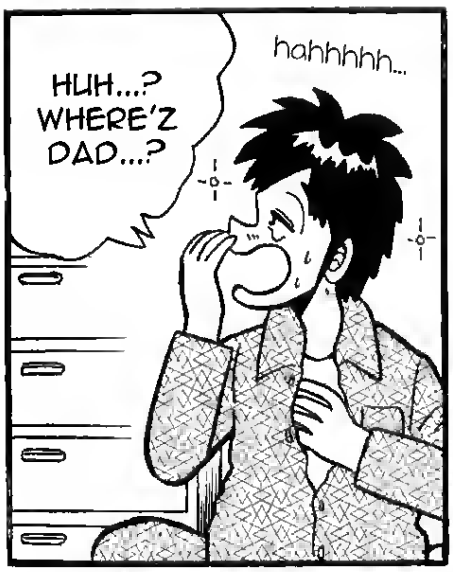
Atsuize Tenma!

第2話 CHAPTER 2
天馬vs.本郷
TENMA VS. HONGOU

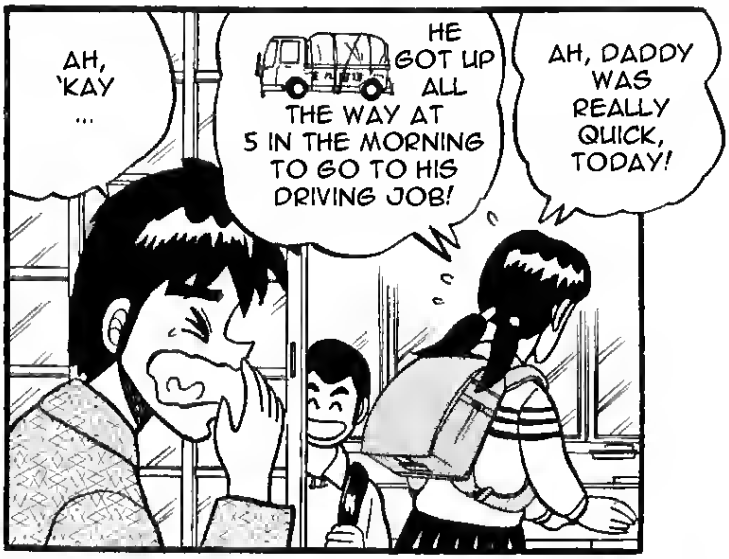
C'MON, GET UP, BIG BRO-THER!
OH, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!


HUH...? WHERE'Z DAD...?
hahhhhh...

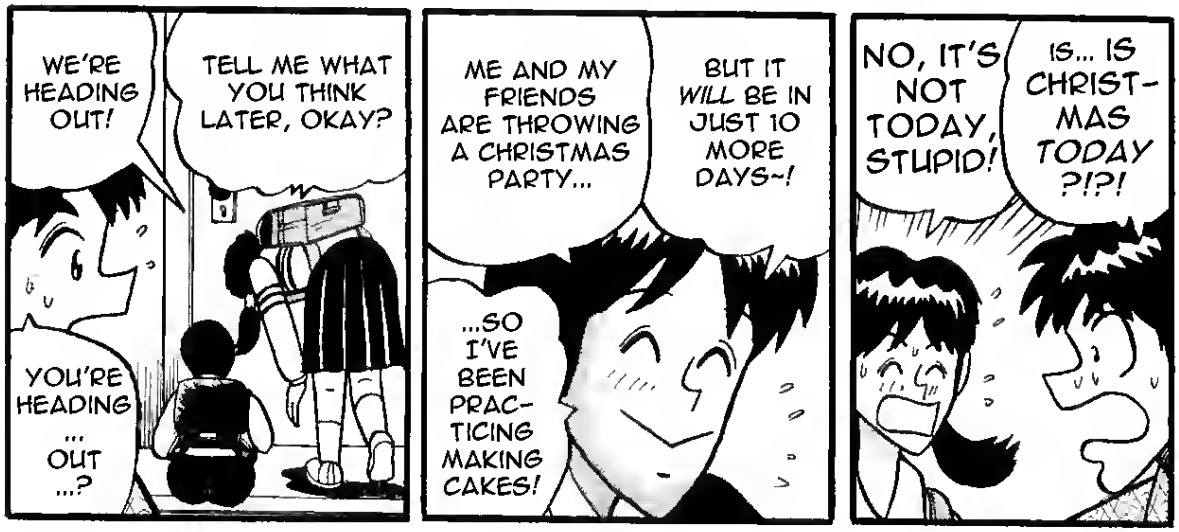
HYAAAAAAAUUUUGHHH...
TENMA, LET'S GO!!!

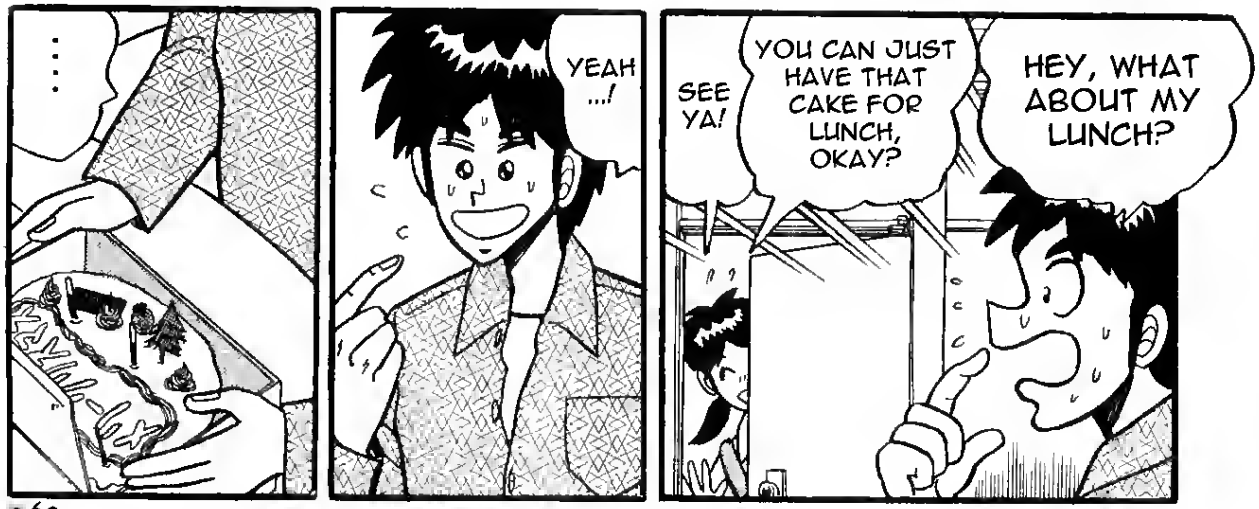
WE'VE GOTTA GO, RIGHT NOW!
HOW CAN YOU STILL BE ASLEEP SO LATE ?!
uuuuuuh

HNN...?
ANYWAY, BIG BROTHER! TAKE A LOOK AT THIS!


AH, 'KAY ...
HE GOT UP ALL THE WAY AT 5 IN THE MORNING TO GO TO HIS DRIVING JOB!
AH, DADDY WAS REALLY QUICK, TODAY!

HUH ...?
IT'S A CHRIST-MAS CAKE!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!


WE'RE HEADING OUT!
TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK LATER, OKAY?
YOU'RE HEADING ... OUT ...?
ME AND MY FRIENDS ARE THROWING A CHRISTMAS PARTY...
BUT IT WILL BE IN JUST 10 MORE DAYS~!
...SO I'VE BEEN PRAC-TICING MAKING CAKES!
NO, IT'S NOT TODAY, STUPID!
IS... IS CHRIST-MAS TODAY ?!?!


. . . .
YEAH ...!
SEE YA!
YOU CAN JUST HAVE THAT CAKE FOR LUNCH, OKAY?
HEY, WHAT ABOUT MY LUNCH?

HAHHHHHH...
WHAT ?!?!
THE PRIVATE SCHOOL NEXT TO US BOUGHT HALF THE STREET, HERE, SO THAT SIDEWALK IS ONLY FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL KIDS.
SINCE WE'RE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS, WE NEED TO STAY AWAY, YEAH?
WELL, WE'RE NOT REALLY ALLOWED TO WALK ON IT ...
HUH ...?
HEYYY!
GOOOOOD MORNIN', TENMA!
...WHILE THE RICH PREPS AT THAT PRIVATE SCHOOL GET TO WALK ON A GUARD RAIL-ENFORCED SIDEWALK?!
YOU MEAN WE HAVE TO WALK ON THIS NARROW LITTLE BOARD OVER THE GUTTER...
CAN'T WE GO ON THAT SIDE-WALK, OVER THERE...?
OH... THAT ...
HUH ...?
THEY'VE FINISHED THE CON-STRUCTION ON THIS STREET...
BIGMAR

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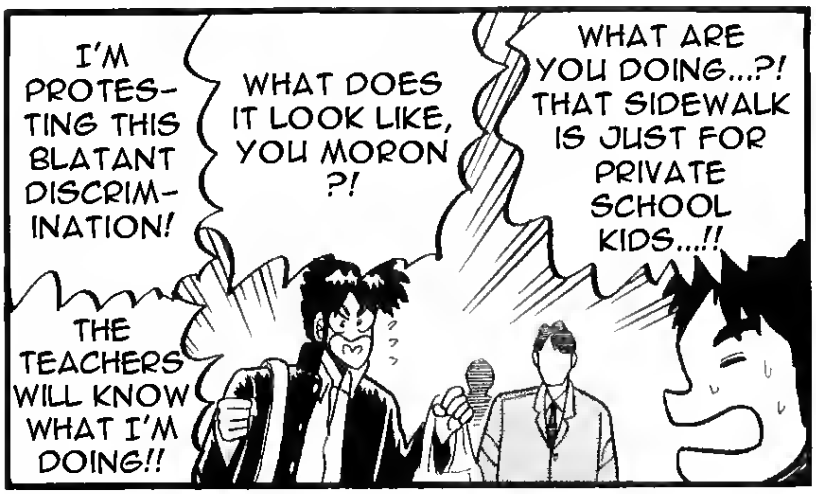

I'M PROTESTING THIS BLATANT DISCRIMINATION!
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE, YOU MORON?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?! THAT SIDEWALK IS JUST FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL KIDS...!!
THE TEACHERS WILL KNOW WHAT I'M DOING!!

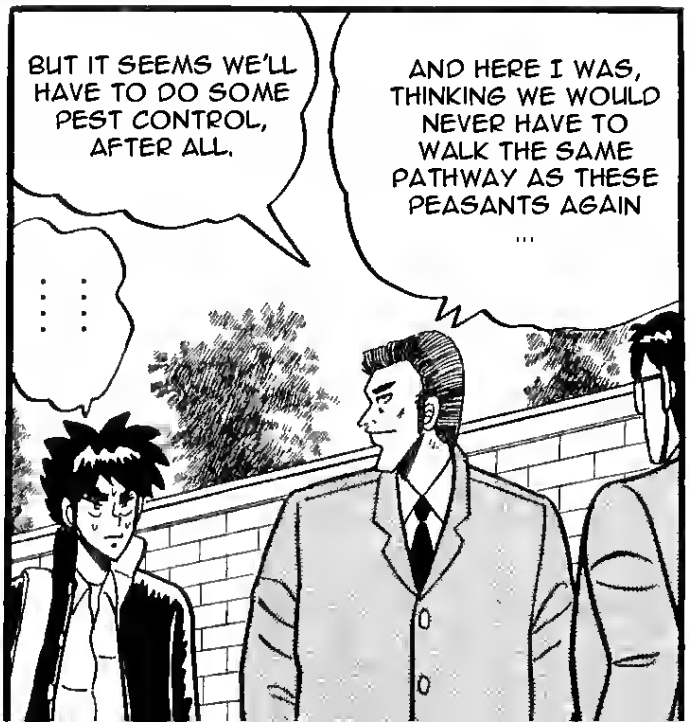
AH ...!

IT SEEMS A FILTHY, TREMBLING RAT HAS CRAWLED OUT ONTO OUR SIDEWALK, HMM?
JEEZ, WHAT COULD THEY BE THINKING ...?!

WHA AAAA AT?!
B-BUT THIS WAS DECIDED AT A TEACHER'S CONFERENCE ...!

ITS BREATH IS SO PUTRID THAT IT MAKES ME WANT TO VOMIT... AND IT'S INFECTING THE AIR RAPIDLY WITH ITS INCESSANT SHOUTING!

DON'T YOU SCREW WITH ME!!
THIS SIDEWALK WAS CONSTRUCTED STRICTLY FOR OUR PERSONAL USE... WHY DON'T YOU RUN ALONG BACK TO YOUR GUTTER, HMM?

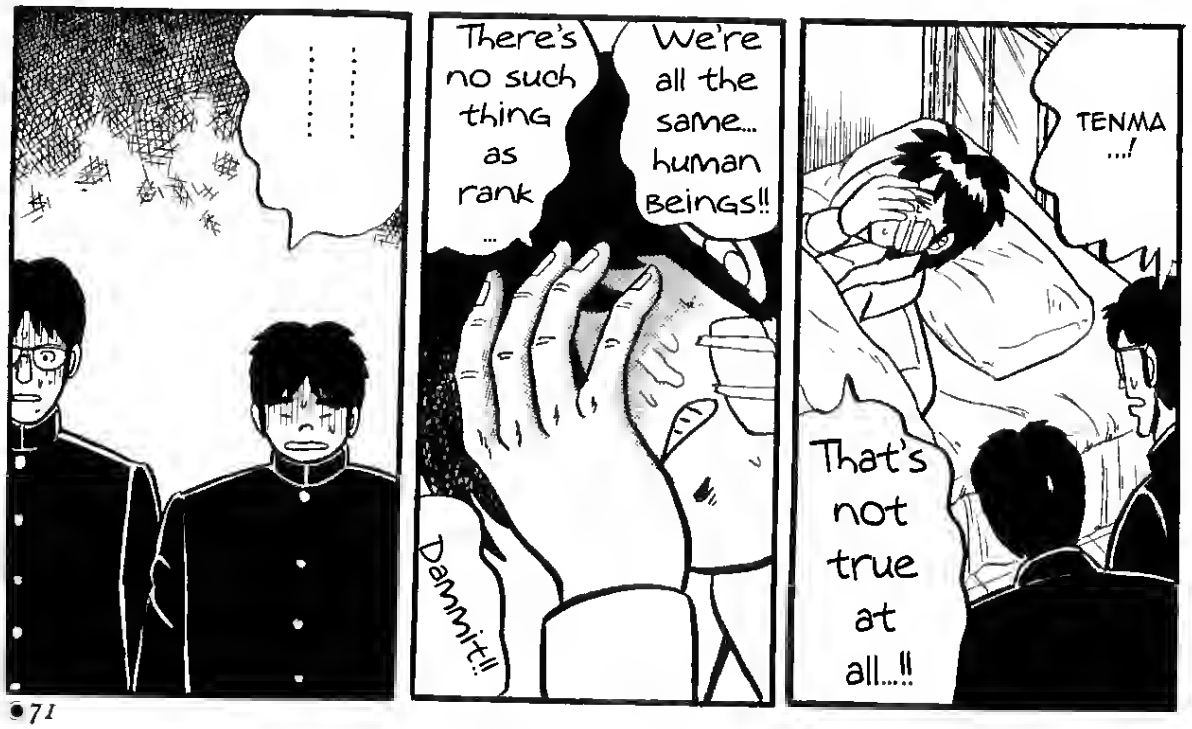

BUT IT SEEMS WE'LL HAVE TO DO SOME PEST CONTROL, AFTER ALL.
AND HERE I WAS, THINKING WE WOULD NEVER HAVE TO WALK THE SAME PATHWAY AS THESE PEASANTS AGAIN
...

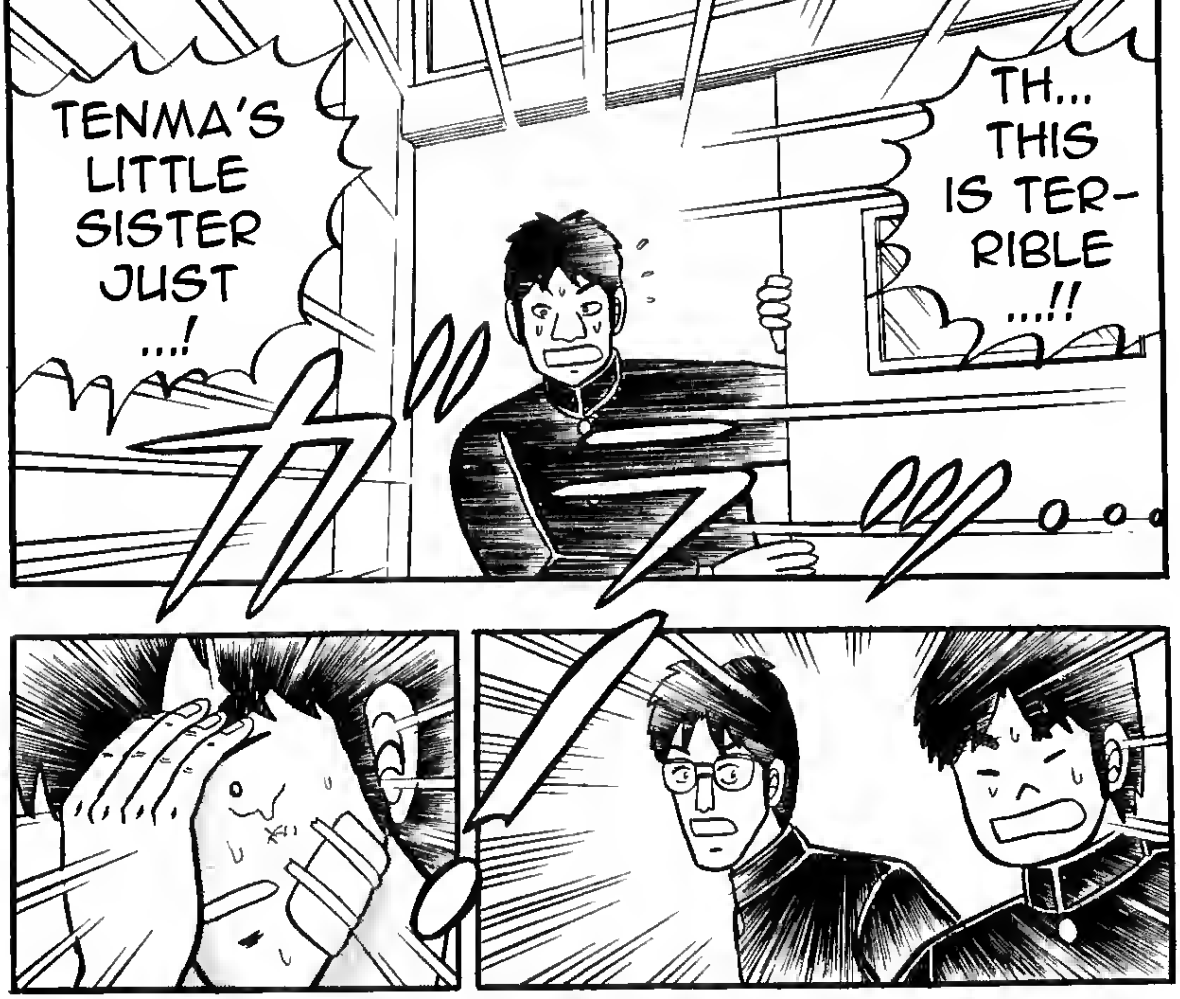
ISN'T THIS A PUBLIC ROAD, FOR ALL TO USE?!
HMM-HM-HM ...
LOOK AT YOU, A POOR CHILD WHO CAN'T EVEN PAY HIS TAXES ...
...AND YOU'RE TELLING US WHAT IS OR ISN'T A PUBLIC ROAD?
WHAT INSO-LENCE.
AND EVEN IF YOU HAD ANY IDEA WHAT YOU WERE SAY-ING, I'M FAR ABOVE THIS LEVEL OF PER-SUASION.
I SIMPLY COULD NOT CARE LESS.
HUMAN LIVES ARE PUT IN THEIR PLACE BY THEIR LEVEL OF ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY AT LARGE.
UP UNTIL NOW, WE HAVE BEEN WALKING ALONGSIDE THOSE WITH NEITHER MONEY NOR INTELLIGENCE ... A TRULY UNNATURAL STATE OF THINGS.
NOW, PLEASE RETURN TO THE PATH YOU HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED.
WHA-...
WHAT'RE ...?!
コトッ...
AND WHAT HAVE WE, HERE?
AH ...!!
スッ!

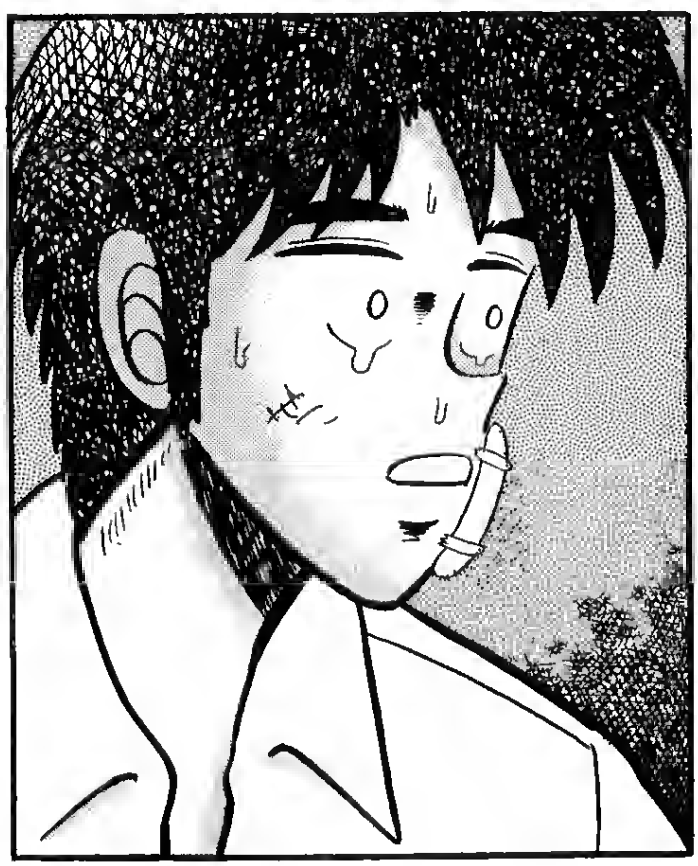
AH ...!
HONESTLY, THE LOWER CLASS WILL EAT ANYTHING THEY CAN FIND, WON'T THEY?
クク
SO THIS IS WHAT PASSES FOR CAKE, THESE DAYS?
ピチャッ
GIVE THAT BACK ...!!
WHY, IT'S CAKE!
THIS? CAKE?
NOTHING MORE THAN PIG SLOP.
WHY, YOU ...!!!

NOON, DURING LUNCH BREAK
TENMA ...
Infirmary
I MEAN, THAT WAS HONGOU AKIMITSU YOU WERE TALKING TO!
IT REALLY WAS HOPELESS, NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRIED...
HE'S THE CITY'S BOXING CHAMPION! WHEN IT COMES TO PHYSICAL STRENGTH, HE'S UNBEATABLE!
...AND HIS PARENTS OWN A WHOLE DIVISION OF THE SCHOOL!
AND MORE THAN THAT, HE'S STUDYING TO BE THE STUDENT PRESIDENT...
TENMA !!!
TENMA ...!!!

MMHMM ...
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, IN THE END, WE'RE JUST PLAIN LOWER IN RANK THAN HE IS...
Shut up.


.....
There's no such thing as rank ...
We're all the same... human beings!!
Dammit!!
TENMA ...!
That's not true at all...!!


TENMA'S LITTLE SISTER JUST ...!
TH... THIS IS TER-RIBLE ...!!



SHE... SHE'S BEEN HURT!
SHE FELL OVER TRYING TO WALK ON THAT NARROW PATHWAY WE USE TO GET TO SCHOOL, NOW...
SHE'S LYING FACE-DOWN IN FRONT OF IT!!

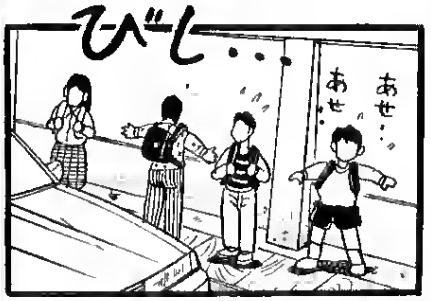
HIRO-MI!!!
HE... HEY!! STAY BACK!!
AH ...!

THAT WIDE SIDEWALK WOULD BE MUCH EASIER IF THEY'D GIVE IT A CHANCE.
YEAH... BEATS ME WHY THESE KIDS EVEN WALK ON THAT NARROW PLANK...
STILL, THAT WALKWAY IS TURNING OUT TO BE QUITE DANGEROUS...

ポツ…
…

HEYYY, BIG BRO-THER!
DON'T WORRY, I'M FINE!
I JUST SCRAPED MY KNEE UP, A LITTLE BIT!

……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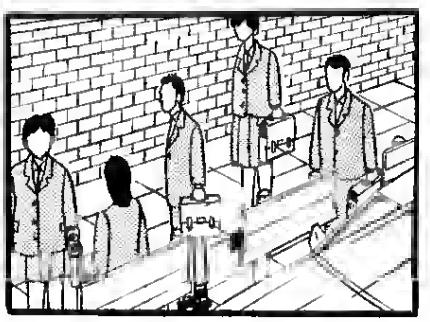
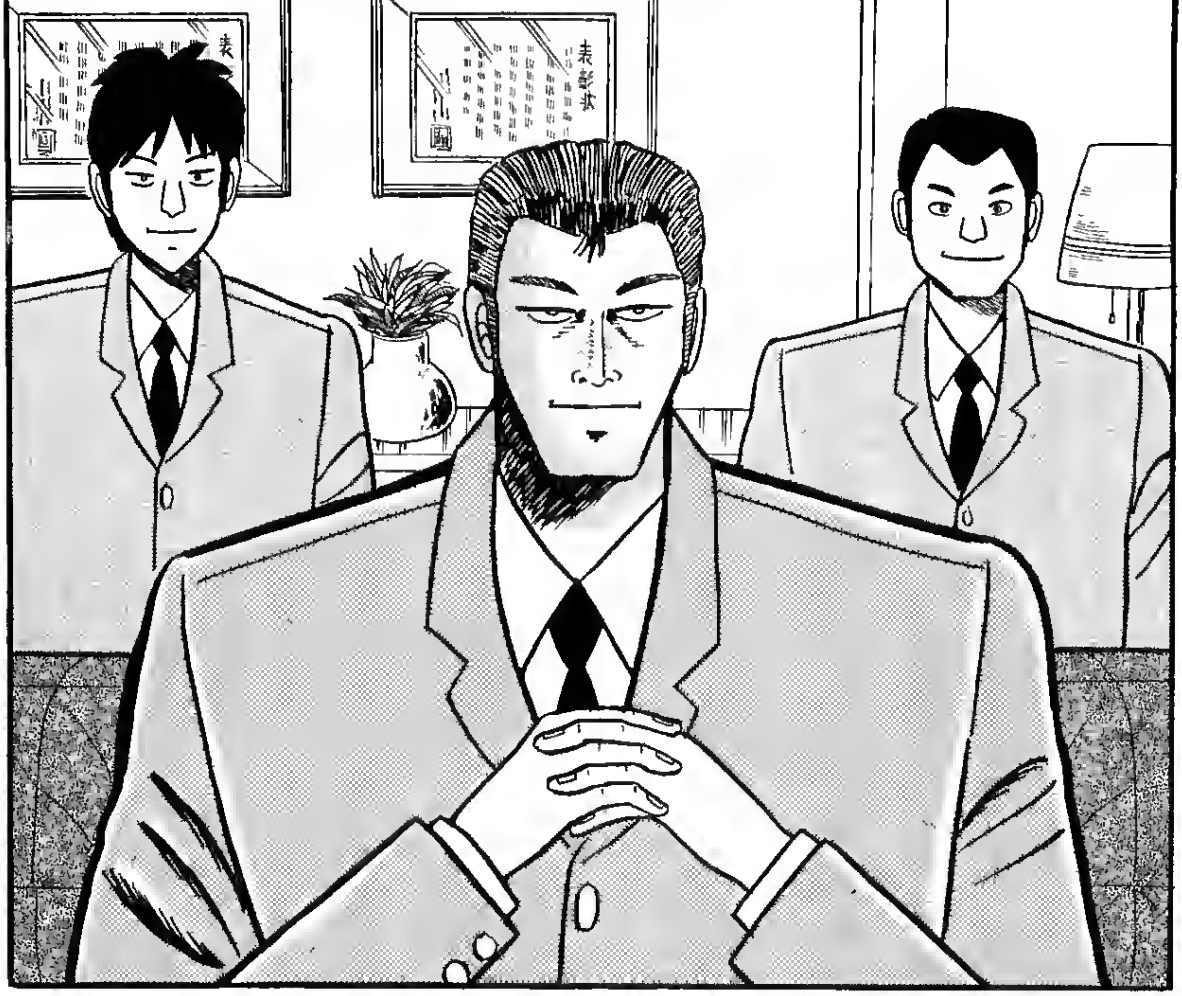
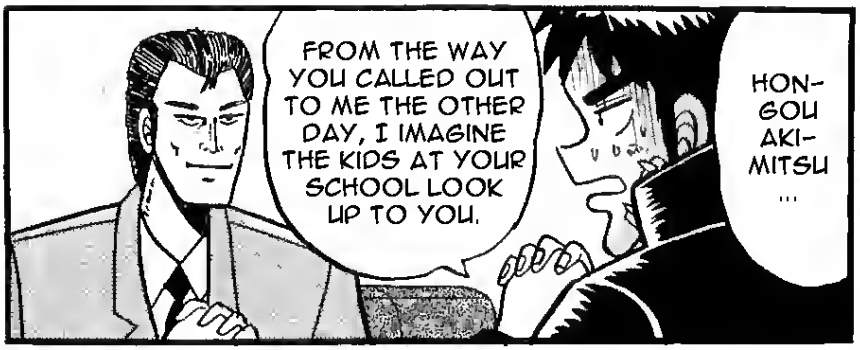
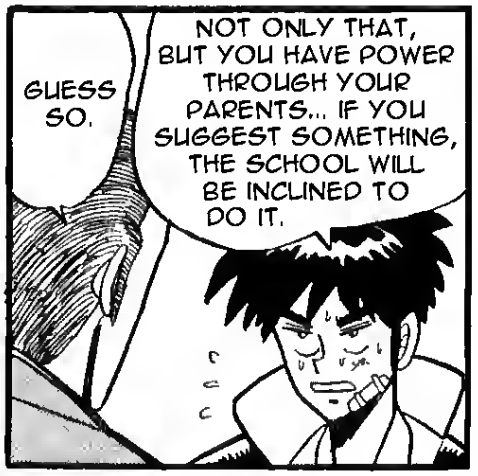
あせ…
あせ…



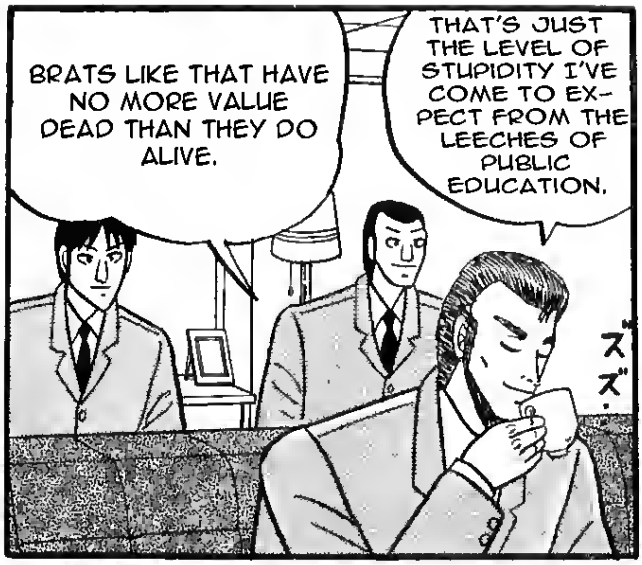



FROM THE WAY YOU CALLED OUT TO ME THE OTHER DAY, I IMAGINE THE KIDS AT YOUR SCHOOL LOOK UP TO YOU.
HON-GOU AKI-MITSU ...

WHAT OF IT?


GUESS SO.
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT YOU HAVE POWER THROUGH YOUR PARENTS... IF YOU SUGGEST SOMETHING, THE SCHOOL WILL BE INCLINED TO DO IT.

MAKE IT SO ANYONE CAN USE THAT SIDEWALK IF THEY WANT TO!


BRATS LIKE THAT HAVE NO MORE VALUE DEAD THAN THEY DO ALIVE.
THAT'S JUST THE LEVEL OF STUPIDITY I'VE COME TO EXPECT FROM THE LEECHES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION.
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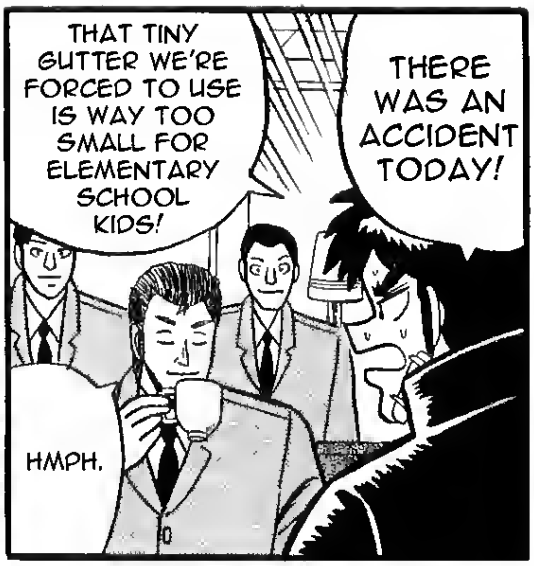
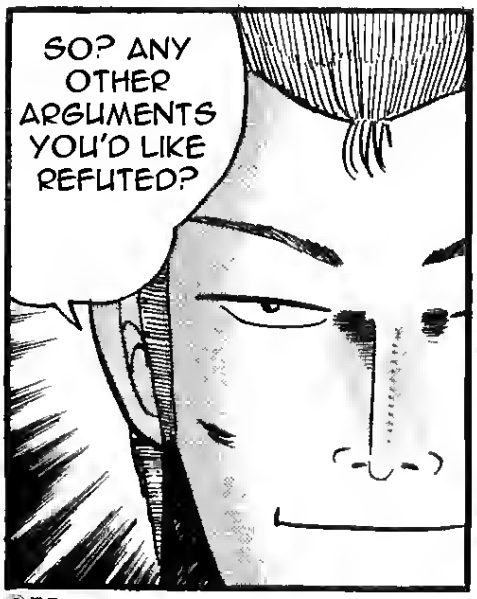
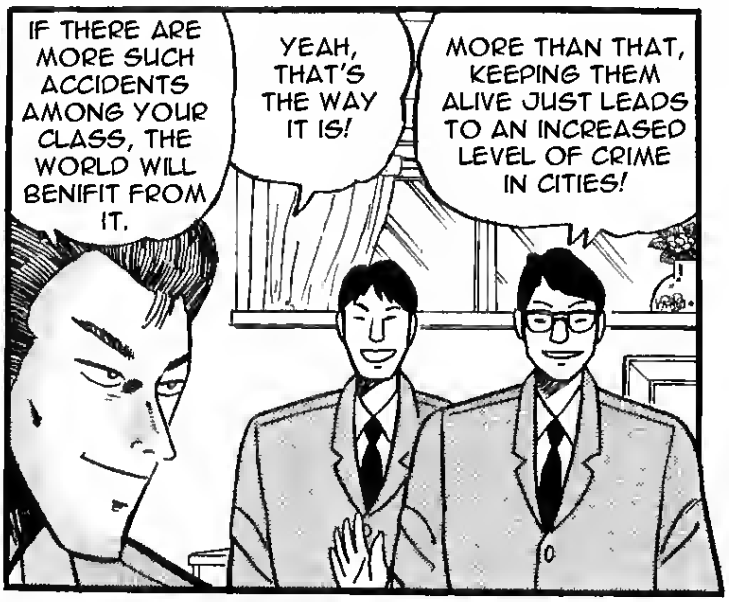
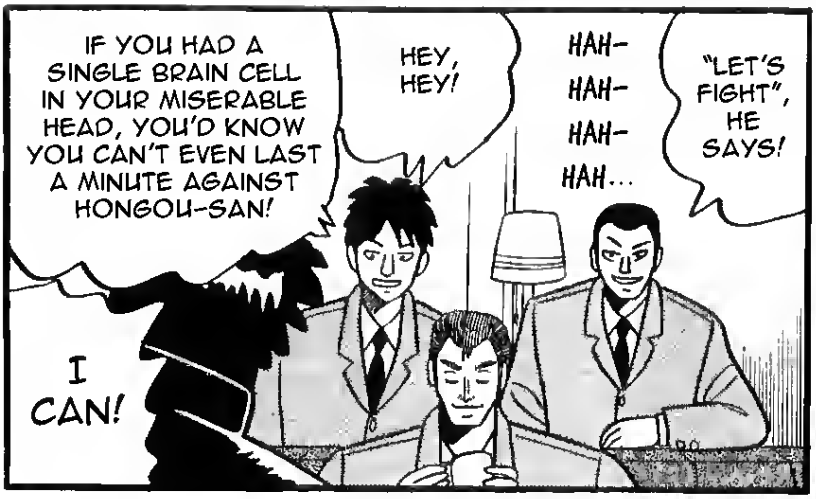
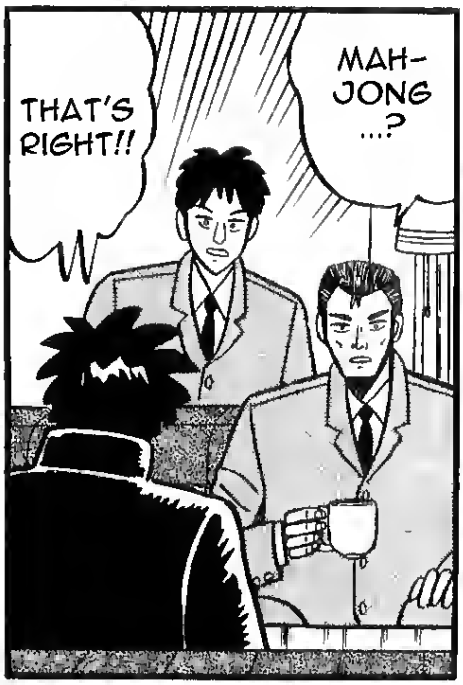

THAT TINY GUTTER WE'RE FORCED TO USE IS WAY TOO SMALL FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KIDS!
THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT TODAY!
HMPH.

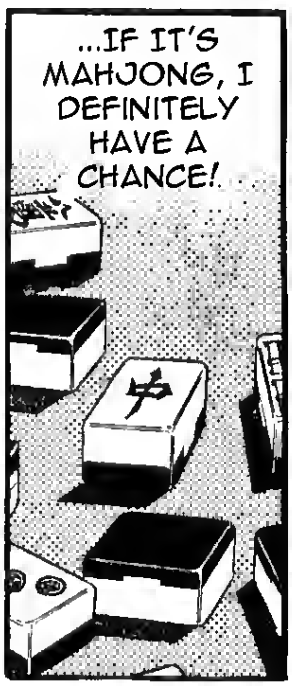

SO? ANY OTHER ARGUMENTS YOU'D LIKE REFUTED?


IF THERE ARE MORE SUCH ACCIDENTS AMONG YOUR CLASS, THE WORLD WILL BENIFIT FROM IT.
YEAH, THAT'S THE WAY IT IS!
MORE THAN THAT, KEEPING THEM ALIVE JUST LEADS TO AN INCREASED LEVEL OF CRIME IN CITIES!


IF YOU HAD A SINGLE BRAIN CELL IN YOUR MISERABLE HEAD, YOU'D KNOW YOU CAN'T EVEN LAST A MINUTE AGAINST HONGOU-SAN!
I CAN!
HEY, HEY!
HAH- HAH- HAH- HAH...
"LET'S FIGHT", HE SAYS!

HMM?
LET'S FIGHT!
IF THAT'S HOW IT'S GONNA BE...

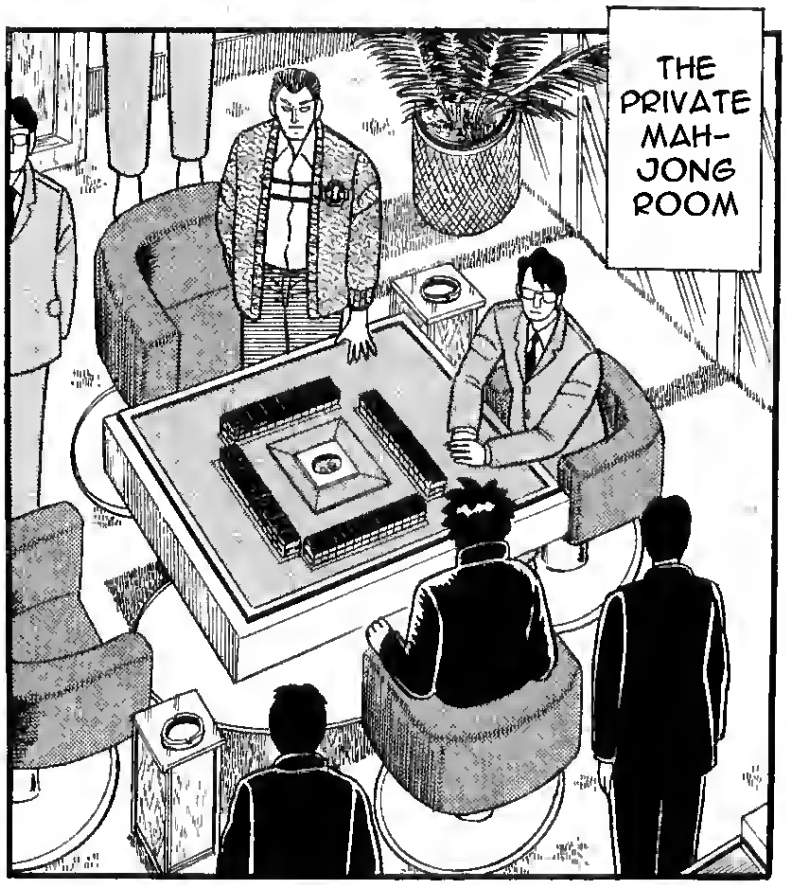

THAT'S RIGHT!!
MAH-JONG ...?

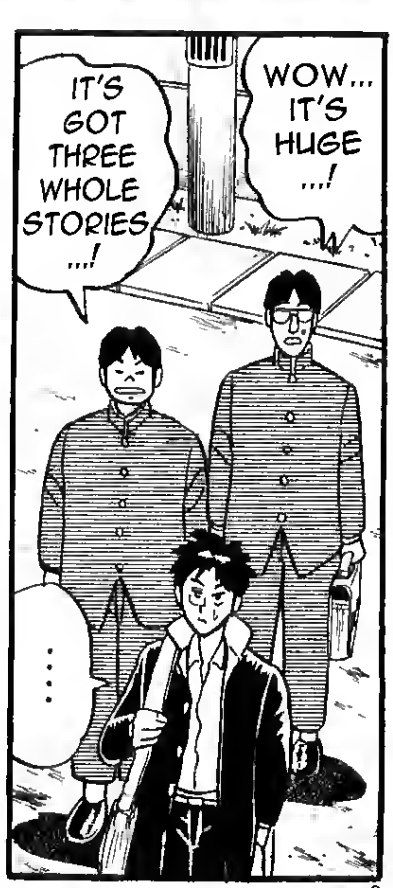

...IF IT'S MAHJONG, I DEFINITELY HAVE A CHANCE!

IT'S TRUE THAT IF IT'S A FIGHT WITH BRUTE STRENGTH OR EVEN KNOW-LEDGE, I CAN'T WIN.
BUT ...

HMM, WELL, IN THAT CASE ...
TO PUT IT INTO WORDS YOU CAN UNDERSTAND, HE'S LIKE A SUPERHERO WHO DOESN'T KNOW DEFEAT!
AND THAT'S NOT COUNTING HONGOU-SAN! EVEN AMONG OUR UPPER CLASS, HE'S A TRUE GENIUS!
YOU NEED TO USE THIS, TOO!
WHAT AN IDIOT... MAHJONG ISN'T ALL ABOUT LUCK!
I'VE NEVER LOST, EITHER!
THIS WILL BE A FIRST FOR ME!
WITH A NIMROD LIKE YOU AGAINST INTELLECT LIKE OURS, WHO D'YOU THINK WILL WIN?!
...
IF YOU DON'T MIND ACCEPTING THAT CONDITION FOR YOUR DEFEAT, I WILL ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE.
HOWEVER, AFTER ALL THAT BRAGGING, I WON'T LET YOU OFF EASY WHEN YOU LOSE.
YOU'LL BECOME OUR SLAVE UNTIL WE GRADUATE, CARRYING OUR BAGS AROUND OBEDIENTLY WHEREVER WE GO.
IT WOULD SEEM AS THOUGH HIS RIFFRAFF SIMPLY WON'T LEAVE US ALONE.
HMM-HM-HM ...

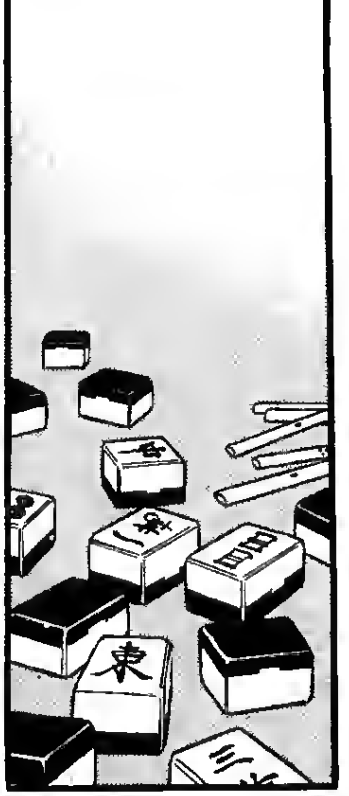
THREE DAYS LATER, AT THE HONGOU ESTATE


THE PRIVATE MAH-JONG ROOM


WOW... IT'S HUGE ...!
IT'S GOT THREE WHOLE STORIES ...!
....

THE WINNER WILL BE THE ONE WITH MORE POINTS OVER BOTH SESSIONS.
THE MATCH WILL LAST FOR TWO SESSIONS, AS A ONE-ON-ONE BET BETWEEN YOU AND I.
IS THAT ALL RIGHT?
I'LL WIN THIS FOR SURE!
VERY WELL, THOUGH I SHALL BE THE ONE TO BE VICTORIOUS.
HM-HMM...
AND ON TOP OF THAT, IF I WIN, YOU'LL MAKE THAT SIDEWALK FREE FOR THE PUBLIC TO USE.
YEAH...
...TENMA COULD NOT GAIN ANY MOMENTUM.
...AND THEN INTO THE SOUTH SET OF THE 1ST SESSION...
HOWEVER, IN THE EAST SET...

...WHEREAS TENMA TRAILED BEHIND IN MERELY 3RD PLACE.
IN THE END, HONGOU CAME OUT WITH THE MOST POINTS IN THE FIRST SESSION...

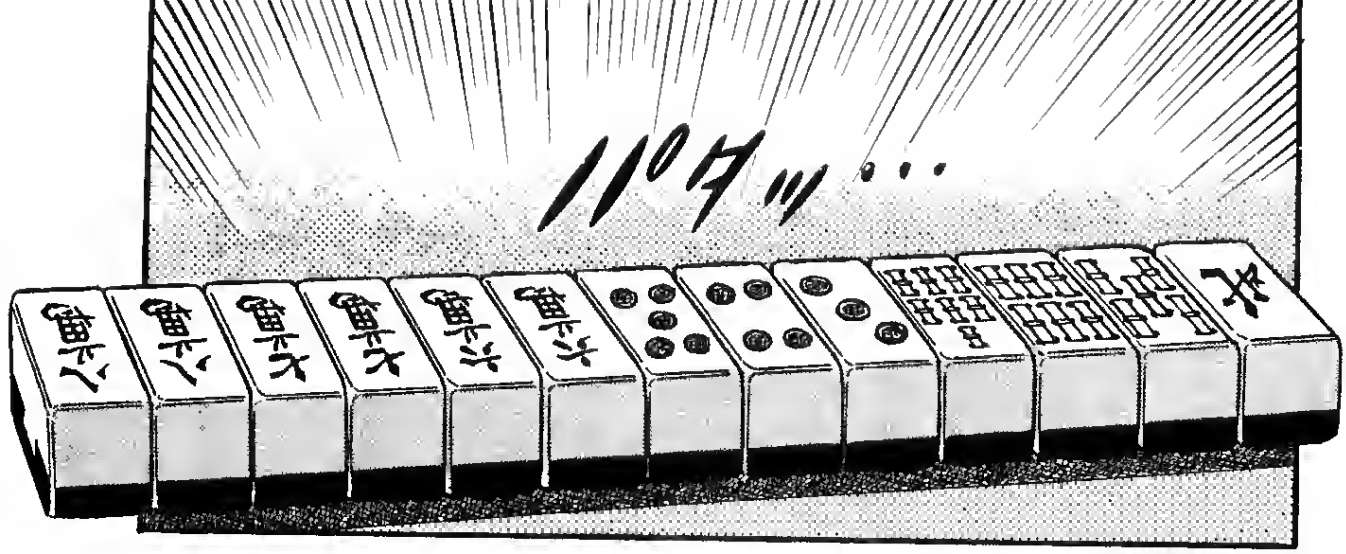


THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN TENMA GET OFF TO SUCH A ROUGH START IN MAHJONG...!

YEAH ...
THIS IS STRANGE ...

RON!

AND MOVING INTO THE SECOND SESSION, HONGOU'S OFFENSE ONLY CONTINUED.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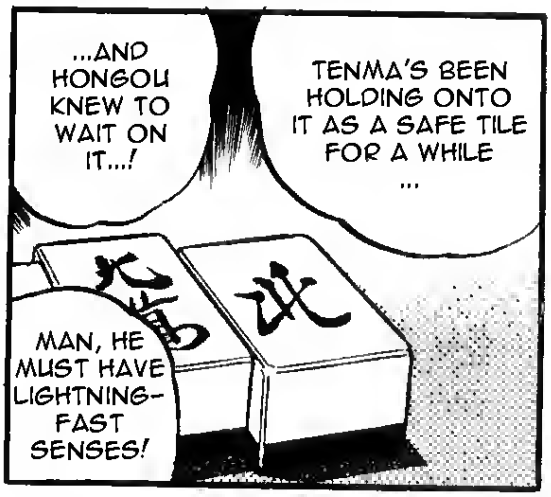
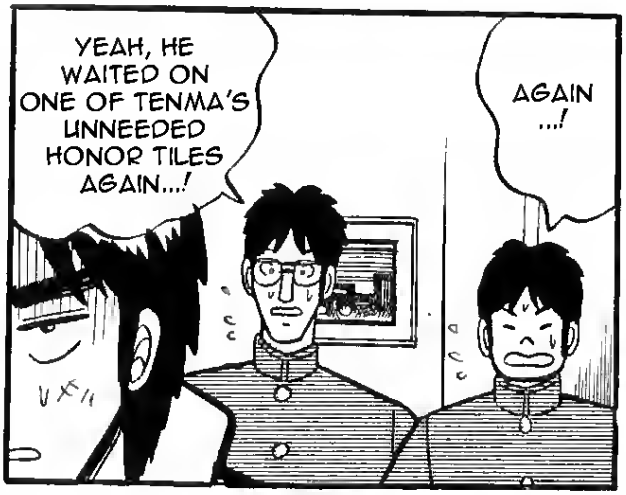
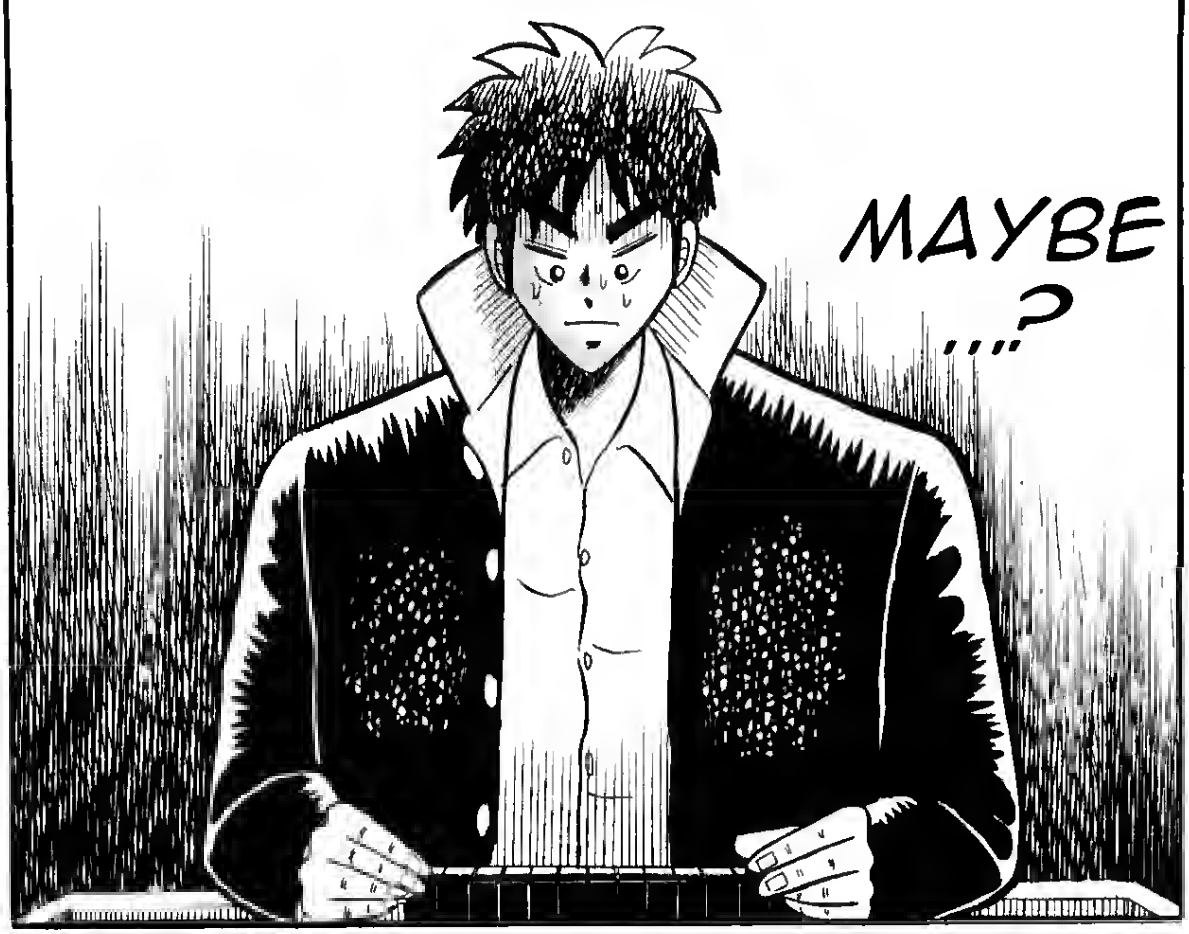

...AND HONGOU KNEW TO WAIT ON IT...!
TENMA'S BEEN HOLDING ONTO IT AS A SAFE TILE FOR A WHILE ...
MAN, HE MUST HAVE LIGHTNING-FAST SENSES!

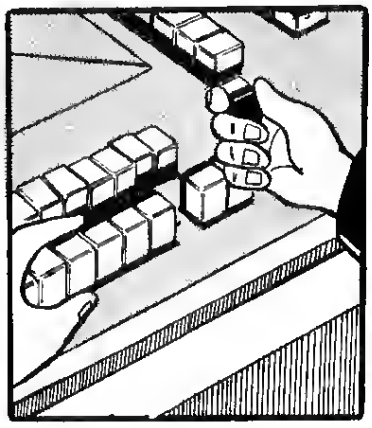

YEAH, HE WAITED ON ONE OF TENMA'S UNNEEDED HONOR TILES AGAIN...!
AGAIN ...!

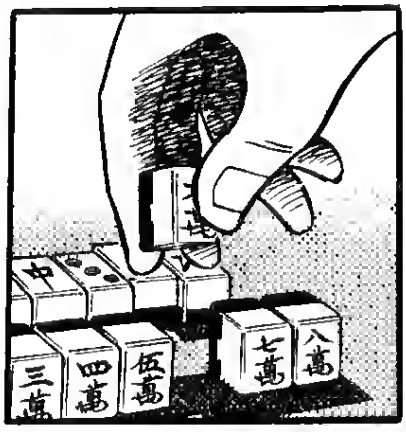
...HE CAN SEE THROUGH ALL OF MY TILES AS IF THEY'RE MADE OF GLASS!
IT'S MORE LIKE ...

THIS DOES-N'T FEEL LIKE IT HAS TO DO WITH HIS SEN-SES ...

NO...


MAYBE ...?

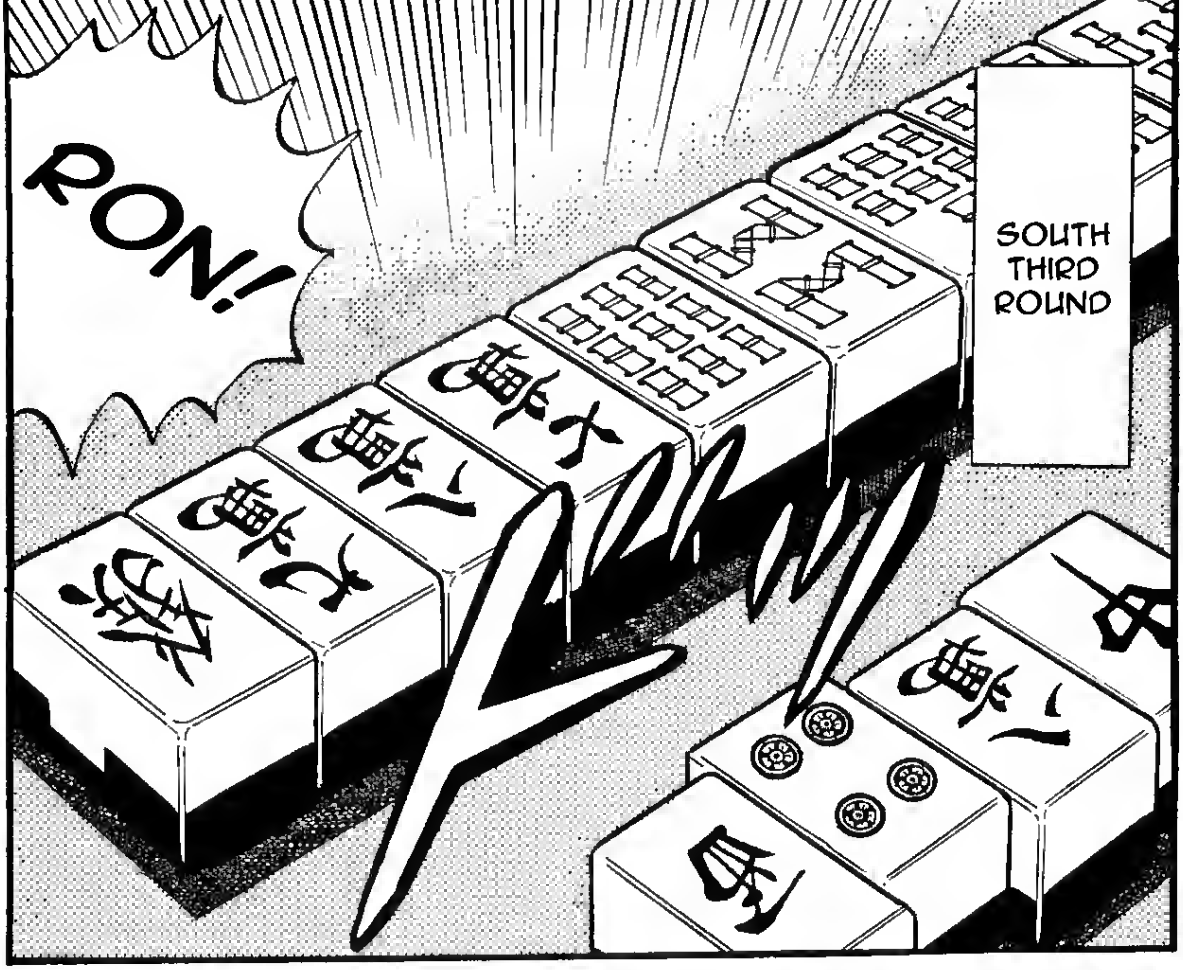



三萬
四萬
伍萬
七萬
八萬

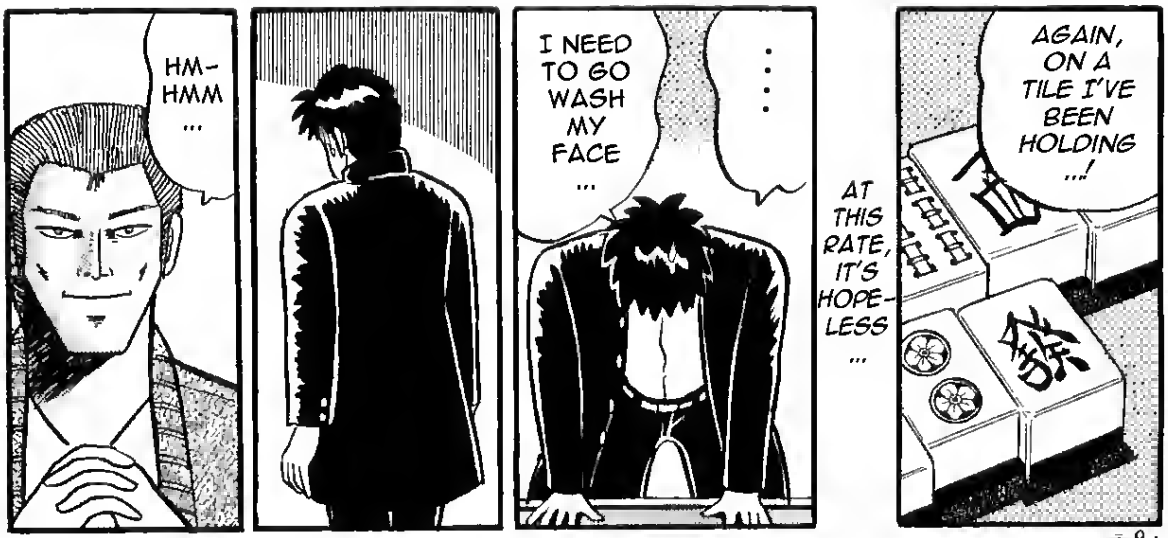
NO ...

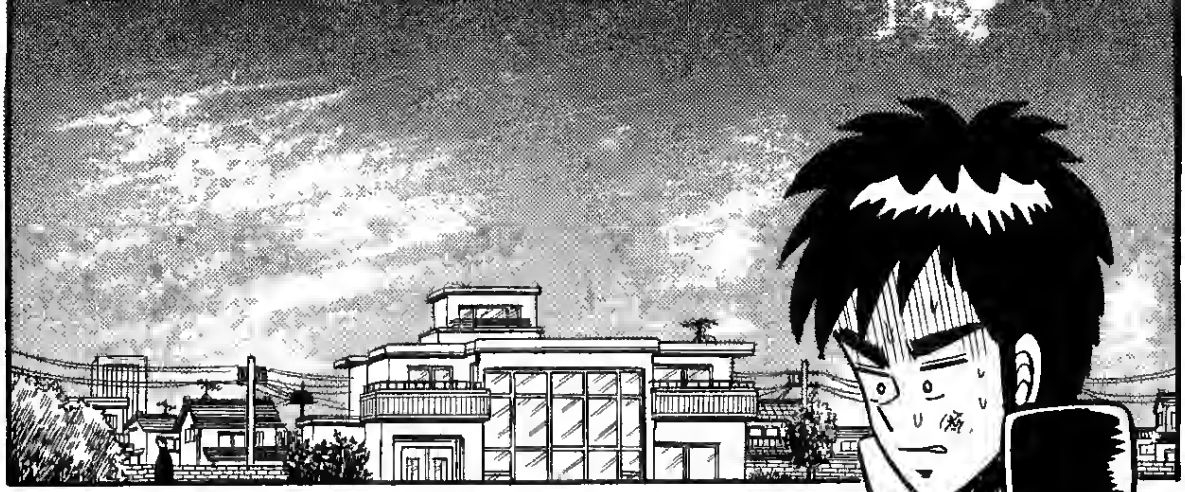
DO YOU HAVE ANY QUALMS ABOUT THE TILES WE'RE USING?
IS THERE SOME-THING WRONG ...?
.....

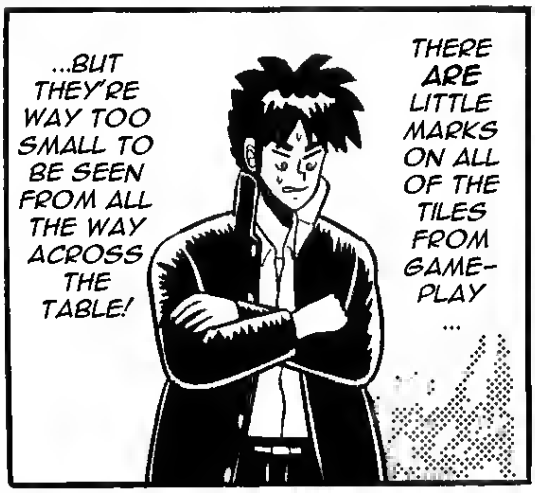
I AM ABLE TO MEMORIZE AND RECOGNIZE THESE TINY MARKS.
HOWEVER, THE TILES ALL HAVE TINY, UNIQUE MARKINGS ON THEM THAT APPEAR NORMALLY OVER THE COURSE OF GAMEPLAY.
I ASSURE YOU, I HAVEN'T MARKED THE TILES OR ANY-THING OF THE SORT.
HM-HMM ...
THAT'S NOT POSSI-BLE ...!!
WHAT'D HE SAY ...?!
HUH ...?!
...THEN I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE OF WIN-NING...!
...AND IF HE CAN TELL WHAT ALL THE TILES ARE BY THEIR BACKS...
BUT IF IT'S ACTUALLY TRUE...

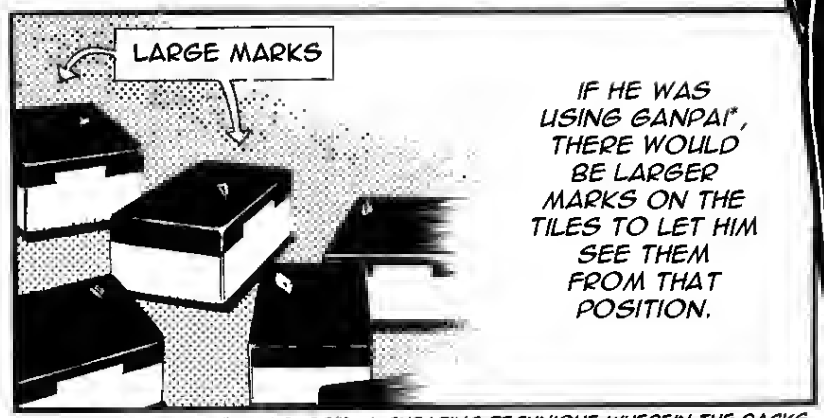

SOUTH
THIRD
ROUND
RON!

URGH
...!!

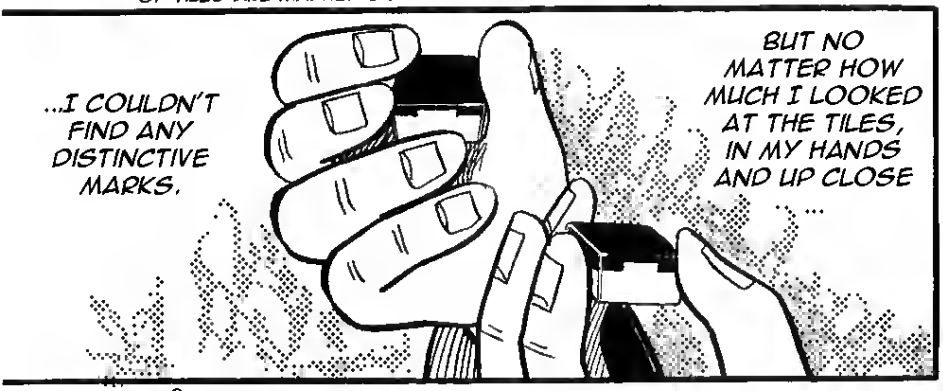

AGAIN, ON A TILE I'VE BEEN HOLDING ...!
AT THIS RATE, IT'S HOPE-LESS ...
I NEED TO GO WASH MY FACE ...
HM-HMM ...




...BUT THEY'RE WAY TOO SMALL TO BE SEEN FROM ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE TABLE!
THERE ARE LITTLE MARKS ON ALL OF THE TILES FROM GAME-PLAY ...



*GANPAI (LITERALLY "GUN TILES"): A CHEATING TECHNIQUE WHEREIN THE BACKS OF TILES ARE MARKED SO THEY CAN BE IDENTIFIED WHILE FACE-DOWN.



RRGH
...

TENMA-KUN!

TENMA-KUN...
...

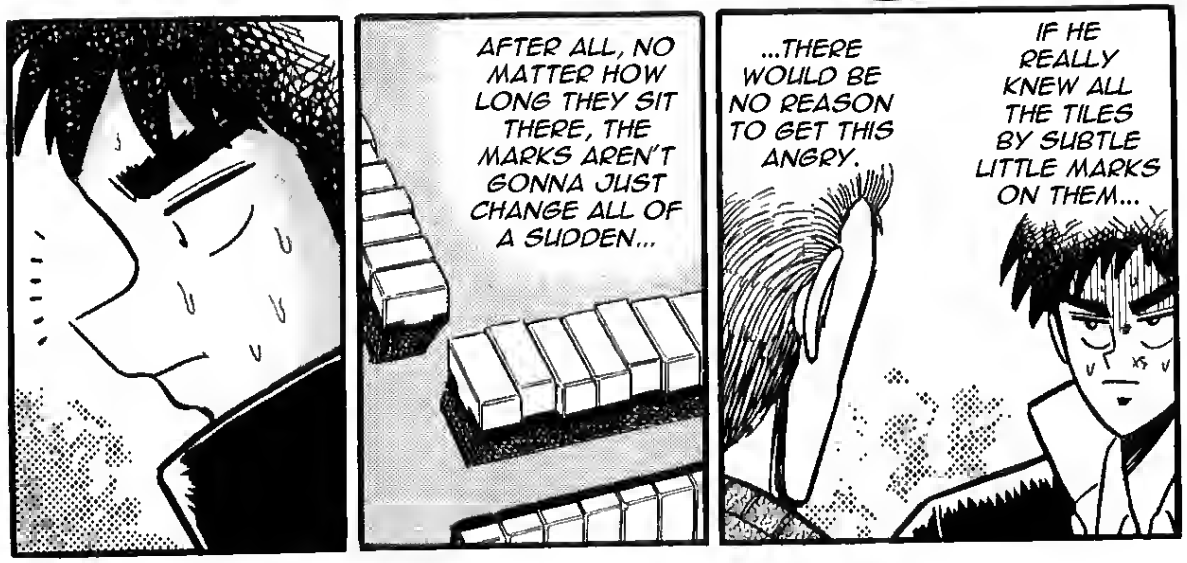
COME ON, IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN 30 MINUTES!
WHAT ...!

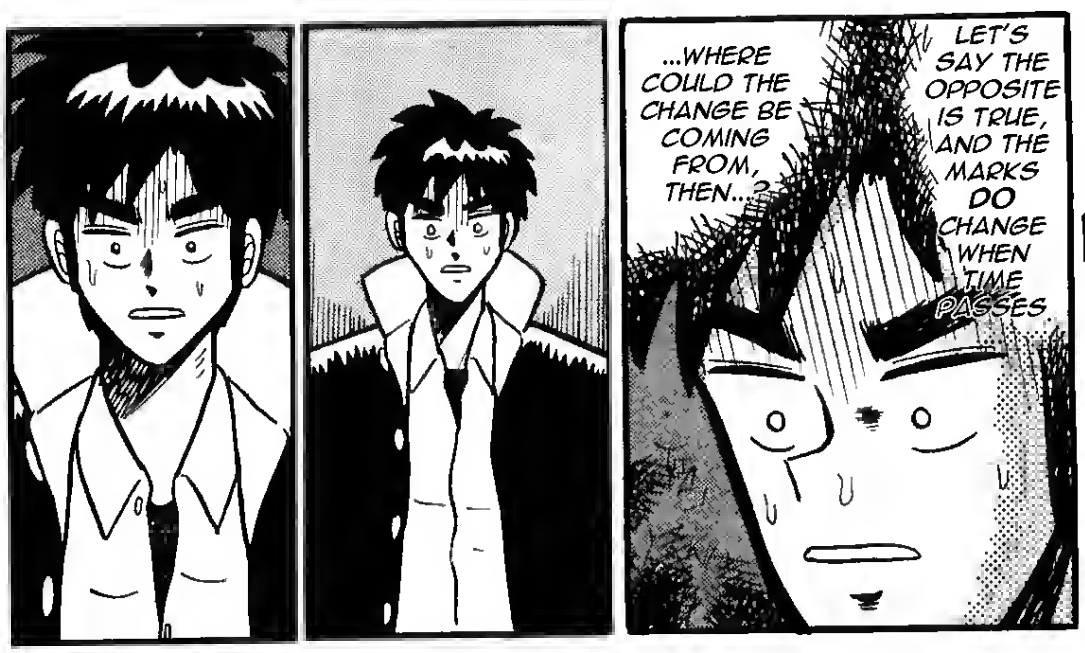
AH ...?
THAT HONGOU GUY IS SAYING YOU HAVE TO COME BACK QUICKLY.

HUH ...?
WELL, I DUNNO... HE'S GETTING REALLY IRRITATED FROM WAITING FOR SOME REASON...

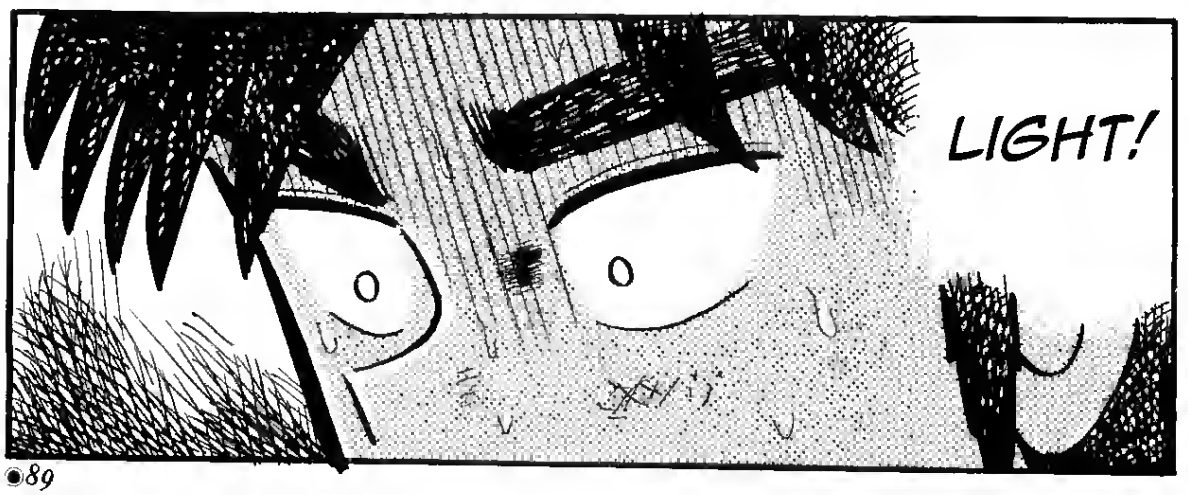
SORRY ...
カチャ...
YOUR FACE IS STILL DIRTY...
NO.
ガタ..
WHAT, WERE YOU TRYING TO TICK ME OFF BE-CAUSE YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T WIN?
OH ...
COME ON!! HURRY UP AND DEAL, ALREADY!!
BUT ...

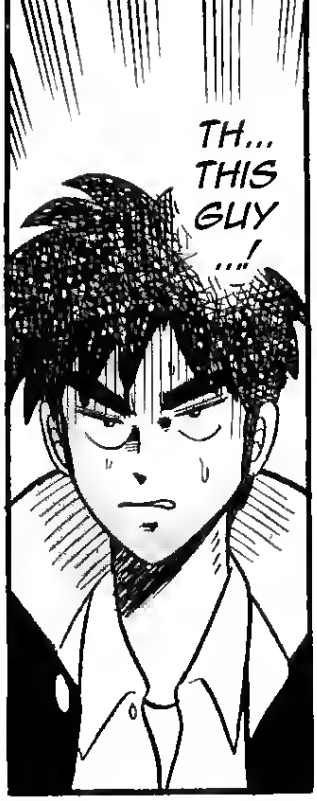
I WAS ONLY GONE FOR A LITTLE BIT, BUT ...
WEIRD ...
?
...HE'S GOTTEN REALLY AGI-TATED SINCE I LEFT.


AFTER ALL, NO MATTER HOW LONG THEY SIT THERE, THE MARKS AREN'T GONNA JUST CHANGE ALL OF A SUDDEN...
...THERE WOULD BE NO REASON TO GET THIS ANGRY.
IF HE REALLY KNEW ALL THE TILES BY SUBTLE LITTLE MARKS ON THEM...


...WHERE COULD THE CHANGE BE COMING FROM, THEN...?
LET'S SAY THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE, AND THE MARKS DO CHANGE WHEN TIME PASSES.
WAIT... HOLD ON...!

IT WOULD HAVE TO BE...


LIGHT!



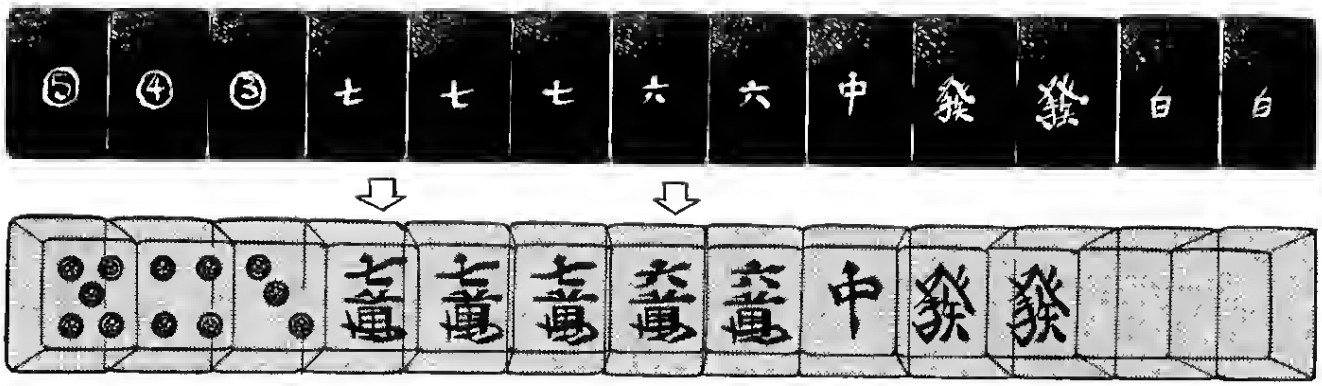
TENMA'S HAND, AS IT APPEARS TO HONGOU

AND WHEN THEY ENTER HIS OPPONENT'S HAND, AND THE LIGHT SHINES UPON THEM ...

MARKS THAT CAN ONLY BE SEEN FROM DIRECTLY WHERE HONGOU IS SITTING...

MARKS SO WELL HIDDEN THAT THEY PASSED A VERY THOROUGH INSPECTION.

THOSE MARKS RISE TO THE SURFACE!



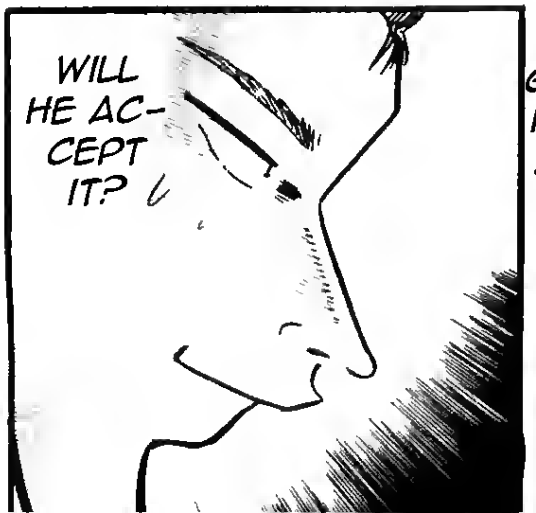
BUT EVEN SO, THE LIGHT ONLY SHINES IN ONE DIRECTION, SO THE ONLY TILES HE CAN SEE ARE THE ONES IN MY HAND.

HE CAN'T SEE THE MARKS ON THE TILES IF THERE'S NO LIGHT SHINING ON THEM!

SO THAT'S WHY HONGOU WAS AFRAID OF THE DAY ENDING... IF THAT HAPPENED, THIS TABLE WOULD BE COVERED WITH SHADOW!

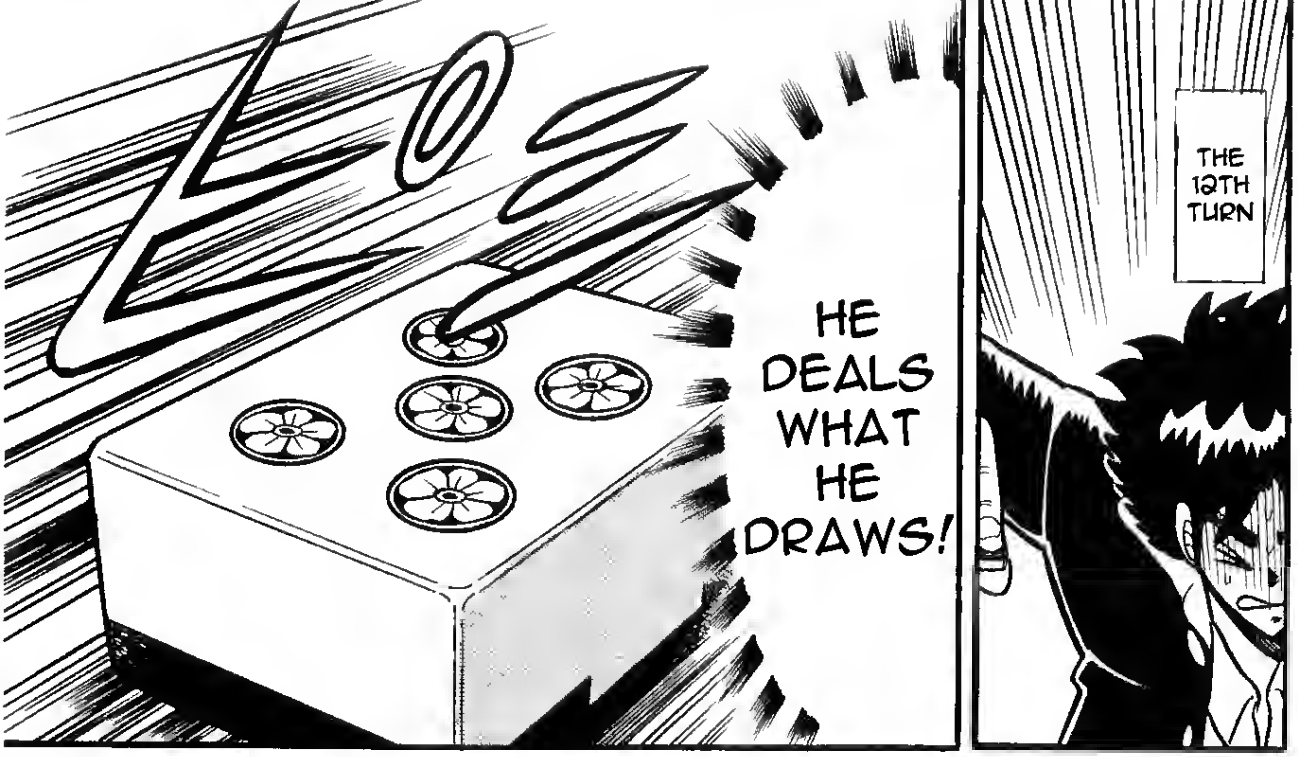
BUT THINKING ABOUT IT, IN A SHORT ONE-ON-ONE MATCH LIKE THIS, THAT'S ENOUGH!

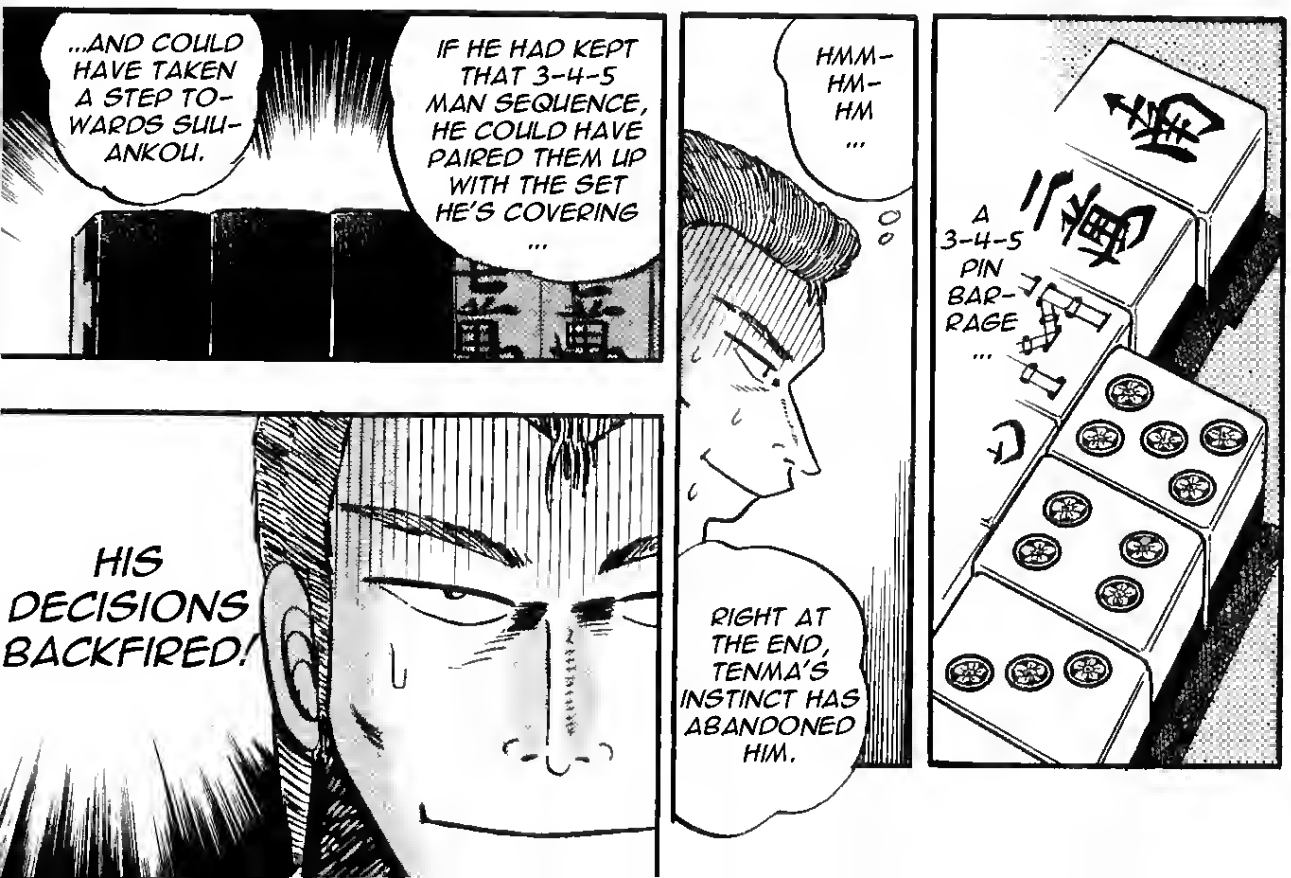
SO HE'S TAKEN TO BLOCKING THE LIGHT FROM REACHING HIS TILES.
HM- HM- HMM ...
3-4-5 PIN!
UNFOR- TUNATELY, IT ONLY REACHES THREE TILES, AND I'VE ALREADY SEEN WHAT THEY ARE ...
NO!
...
THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO... THIS IS REALLY AWFUL.
DANG ...
AND TO TOP IT OFF, I CAN'T MAKE A COMEBACK UNLESS I SCORE A YAKUMAN HAND!

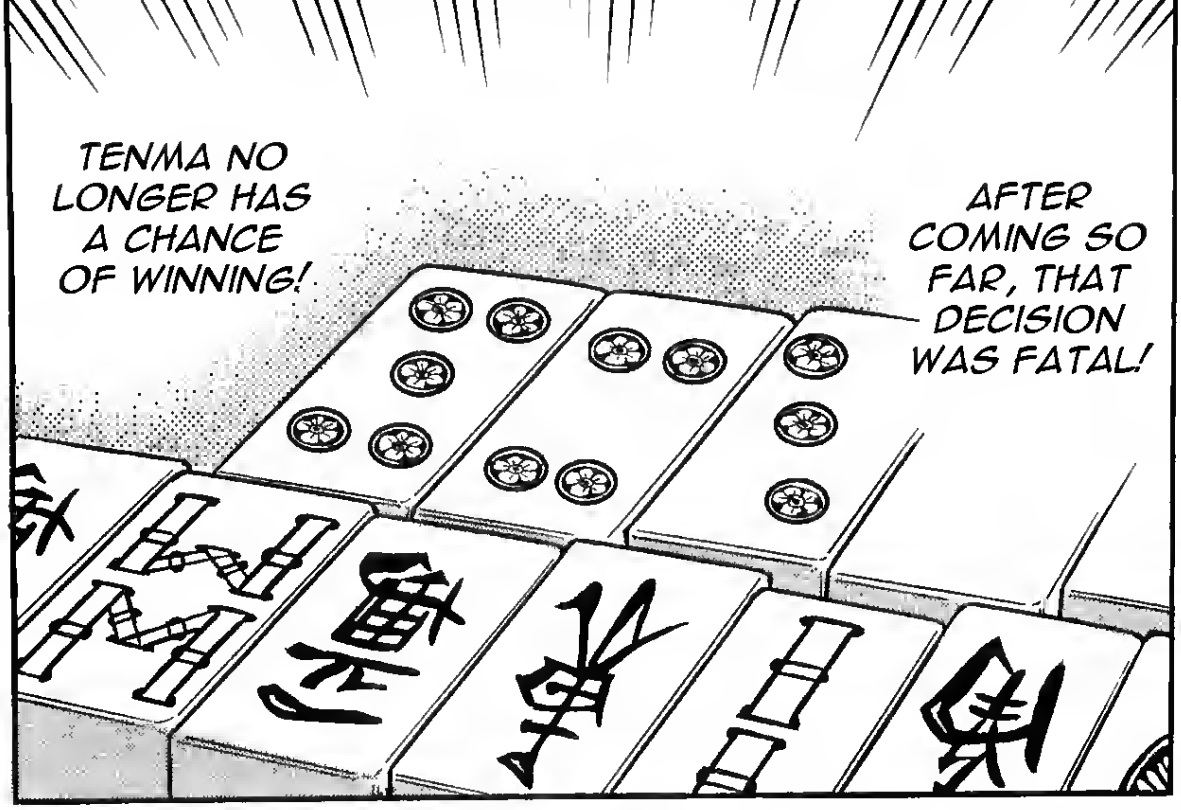


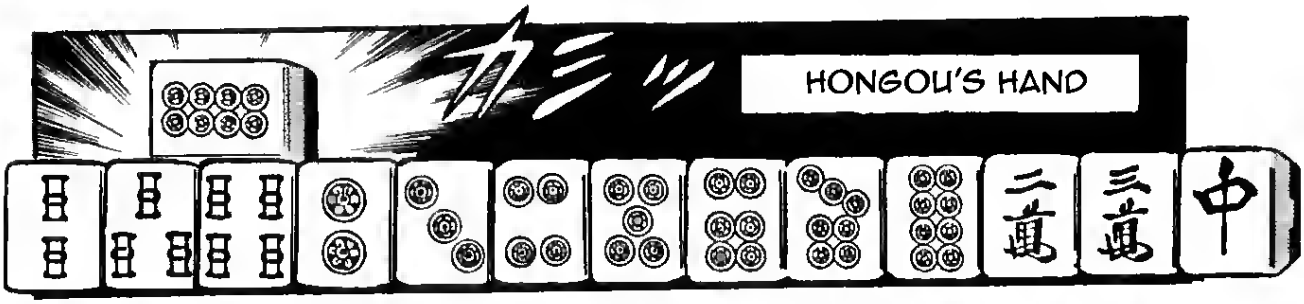
NOT 'TIL I'VE GIVEN IT MY ALL!!

...HE DEALT WHAT HE DREW.
SO HE DIDN'T CHANGE UP HIS HAND...
TENMA'S HAND, AS IT APPEARS TO HONGOU
ONCE AGAIN, TENMA DEALS WHAT HE DRAWS!
THE 11TH TURN
HE'S GIVING UP ON PINZU TILES AND HEADING FOR MANZU HON ITSU, WITH A CHANCE FOR DAI SAN GEN*.
I SEE ...
*DAI SAN GEN: COLLECTING THREE OF THE CHUN, HAKU, AND HATSU TILES MAKES FOR ONE OF THE BEST MAHJONG HANDS; YAKUMAN.


THE 12TH TURN
HE DEALS WHAT HE DRAWS!


...AND COULD HAVE TAKEN A STEP TOWARDS SUU-ANKOU.
IF HE HAD KEPT THAT 3-4-5 MAN SEQUENCE, HE COULD HAVE PAIRED THEM UP WITH THE SET HE'S COVERING ...
HMM-HM-HM ...
A 3-4-5 PIN BARRAGE ...
HIS DECISIONS BACKFIRED!
RIGHT AT THE END, TENMA'S INSTINCT HAS ABANDONED HIM.





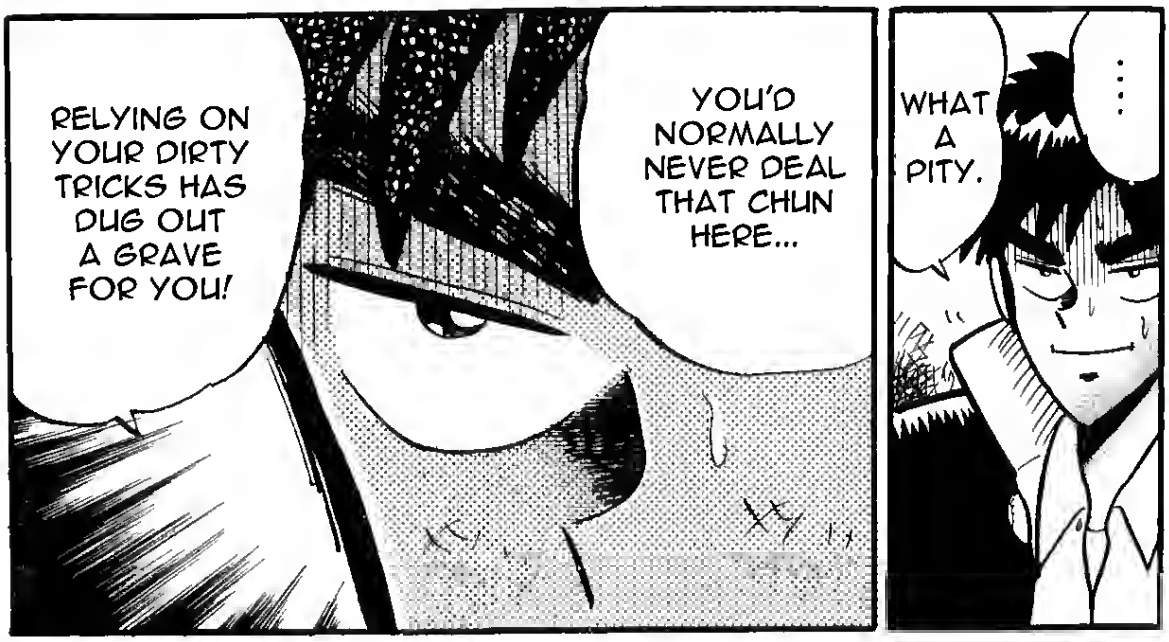
AND HERE'S THE CLIN-CHER!

?

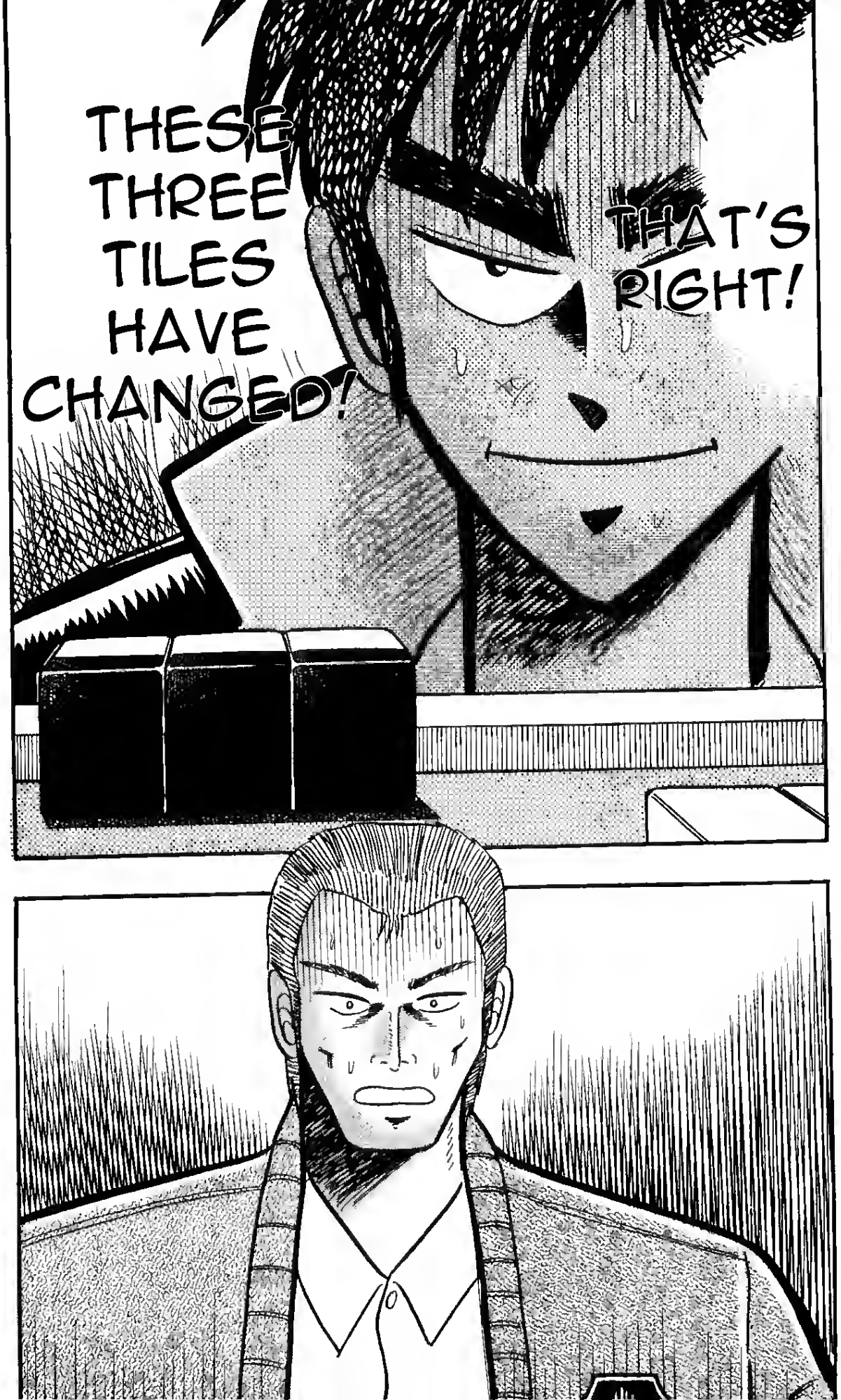
....?

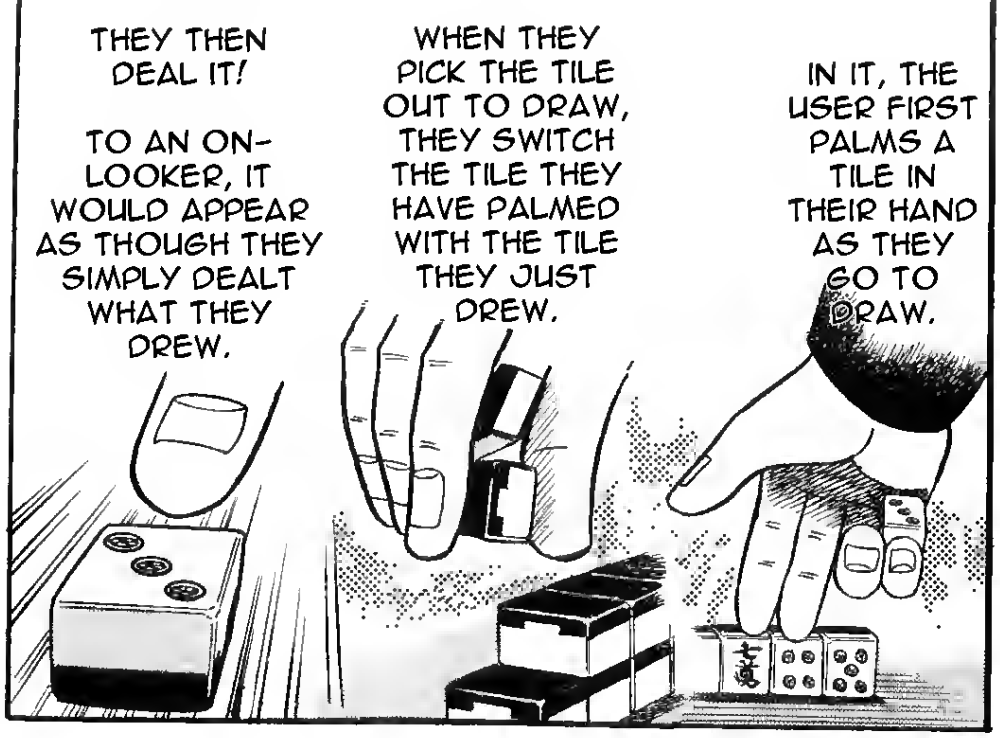
THAT CHUN IS MINE!

HIS HAND IS STILL IN SHAM-BLES!
BUT IT CAN'T BE...!
WHA-...?!

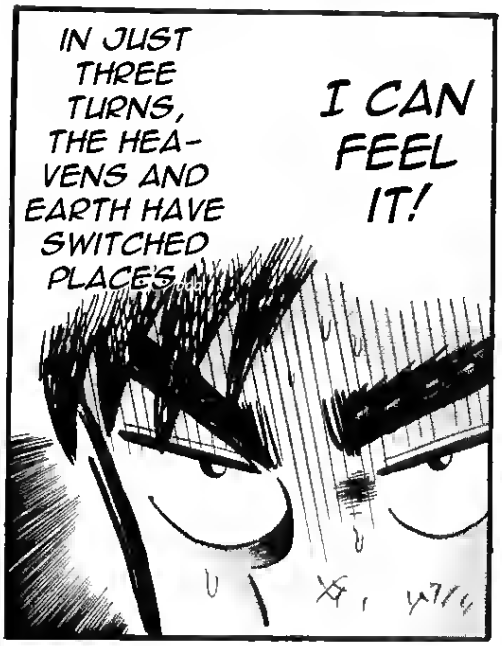

RELYING ON YOUR DIRTY TRICKS HAS DUG OUT A GRAVE FOR YOU!
YOU'D NORMALLY NEVER DEAL THAT CHUN HERE...
WHAT A PITY.
...

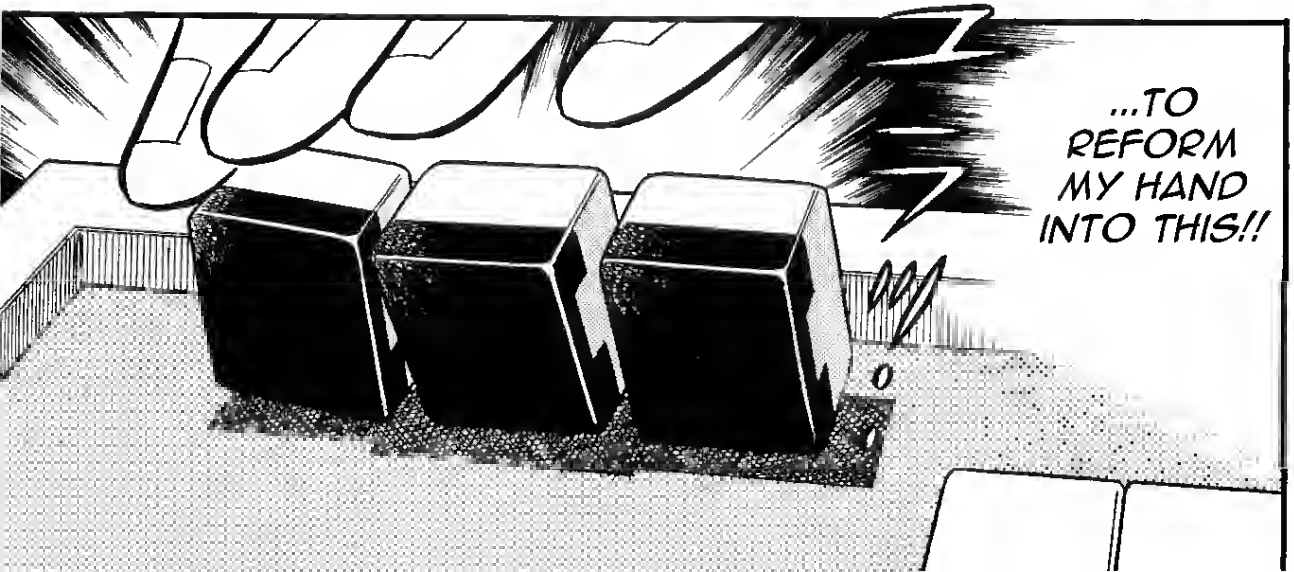
WHAT IS HE TRYING TO-?!
WHA ...?
ALL YOU KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT I HAVE THESE 10 TILES.
RIGHT AT THE MOMENT ...
IT CAN'T BE ...?!
DOES THIS MEAN THOSE DISCARDS WERE...?!
AH ...!!


THESE THREE TILES HAVE CHANGED!
THAT'S RIGHT!


THEY THEN DEAL IT!
TO AN ON-LOOKER, IT WOULD APPEAR AS THOUGH THEY SIMPLY DEALT WHAT THEY DREW.
WHEN THEY PICK THE TILE OUT TO DRAW, THEY SWITCH THE TILE THEY HAVE PALMED WITH THE TILE THEY JUST DREW.
IN IT, THE USER FIRST PALMS A TILE IN THEIR HAND AS THEY GO TO DRAW.

TEN-MA'S SECRET TECH-NIQUE... THE DRAW SWITCH FAKE-OUT!

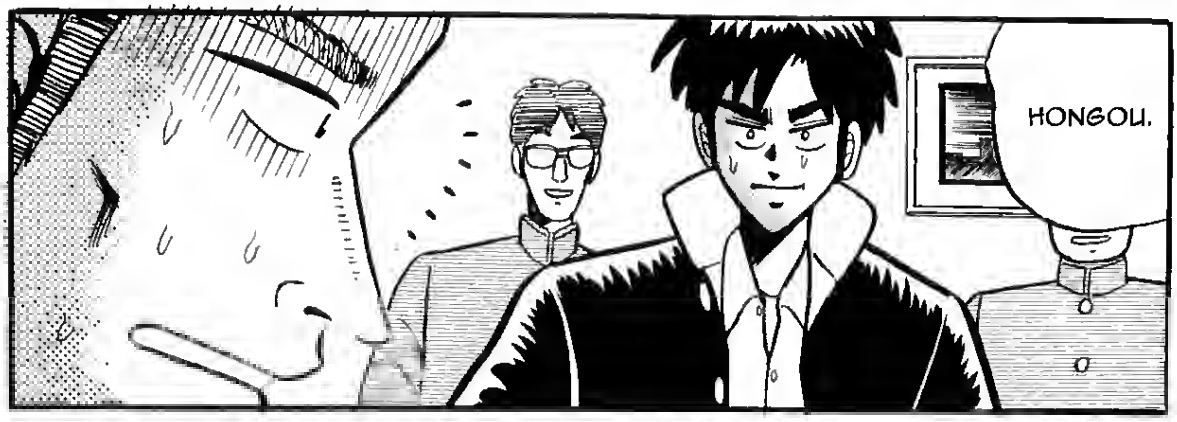




ハァ……
ハァ……

TEN-
MA'S
COME-
BACK!
A
DIRECT-
HIT
DAI SAN
GEN!!

THERE YOU HAVE IT!
YAA-HOO OO!!
TEN-MA!!
YOU DID IT !!!!!
THAT'S IM-POSS-...!
THAT ...
ゥ゛
ケ゛
0゛
。


HONGOU.

JUST AS LONG AS YOU LET IT.

...WHERE JUST THREE TURNS CAN CHANGE EVERY-THING.
MAHJONG IS A GAME FILLED WITH POSSIBIL-ITIES...

・・・・

YOU OVER-LOOKED THAT VERY REAL POSSIBILITY.

YEA AAA HHH!
LET'S GO.
IF YOU THINK HUMANS CAN BE CATEGO-RIZED BY CLASS...
...THEN IT'S YOU WHO'S THE REAL NIMROD.
SO YOU THINK YOU'RE THE KING OF THE MIDDLE-SCHOOLERS, DO YOU?!
DON'T GET A BIG HEAD!

第2話 天馬vs.本郷☆完
CHAPTER 2 - TENMA VS HONGOU - FIN

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